

# You Hear What You Will, The Horns I Hear Them Still: Prolongation and Persistence in Act II Scene 1 of *Tristan und Isolde*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The investigation of musical meaning in Wagner's operas is as old as the operas themselves.<sup>1</sup> The last century of Wagner criticism has produced analyses ranging (in rough historical order) from studies of leitmotiv, to explorations of large-scale form, key, and modulation, to in-depth investigations of harmony and voice leading using sophisticated analytical methods.<sup>2</sup> What the differing music-analytic approaches tend to have in common is that the goal of the *musical* analyses, whatever parameter they emphasize—e.g., leitmotiv, form, harmony, instrumentation—has largely been to illuminate or elucidate the *dramatic* meaning of the operas. Such a critical positioning, which sees the domains of drama and music as being organically integrated and mutually reinforcing, is characteristic of much recent analysis of texted music; it is elevated, for instance, in David Lewin's "Musical Analysis as Stage Direction" to a general maxim: "no analysis without direction; no directing without analysis."<sup>3</sup> But many critics traverse the space that separates their musical and dramatic observations too quickly, and correspondingly, the musical evidence they provide in support of their dramatic claims proves not actually to generate those claims, but to grate against them.<sup>4</sup> An opera analyst's musical and dramatic claims may both be sound, and yet the logical relationship that obtains between them may not be "organic," as it were, but aporetic.<sup>5</sup>

In what follows I will be interested in the relationship between an analytic method and the results it generates: what *kinds* of claims are different analytic approaches designed to make? What kinds of claims are they particularly good at making? Where are their horizons? And how might the types of musical claims a given model generates relate to different dramatic scenarios? With the possible

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1 Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker note that "the tradition of analyzing Wagner goes back to the 1850s, when a number of book-length studies of his music had already appeared, along with many critical articles in the German musical press" (1989, 6–9).

2 A *pro tanto* argument seems to be lurking in the background of this trend toward ever higher-powered analyses of Wagner. In its negative form it might read: to the extent that analyses of Wagner fail to harness the power of sophisticated music-analytic tools, they fail to illuminate complex relationships between music and drama. For histories of analytical positions see Darcy (1993, 45–58) and Grey (2006).

3 Lewin (2006, 19). Further: "Each intuition we have about the behavior of characters on stage naturally seeks its validation (*inter alia*) through musical-textual analysis" (19). In the following I will refer to this critical positioning as "Lewin's maxim." For a pithy critique, see Abbate (1989, 37).

4 Studies relevant to the current project are cited in footnote 22, although this is as much a general claim as a specific one.

5 I hardly mean to disavow the thesis that in Wagner music and drama often work hand-in-hand to present a unified "total" structure, which I take not only to be self-evident but indisputable. I only maintain that the precise relationship between the two domains has often been overlooked.

exception of the last, these questions seem scarcely to be in need of examination; as a community we are familiar with the *kinds* of claims a certain analytic “technology” can make, or tends, typically, to make, whether or not that technology has been explicitly theorized in those terms. And yet a set of published analyses of a scene from Act II of *Tristan und Isolde* suggests that we as music analysts are not always as sensitive to the limits of our analytic methods as we could be.

In this paper I make three (slightly overlapping) claims. My analytic claim is that a Schenkerian approach is better equipped to provide a robust interpretive analysis of a particular excerpt of operatic music (in this case from Act II Scene 1 of *Tristan*) than are the non-prolongational approaches of a handful of earlier commentators. This is, I argue, especially because of the peculiar ability of the Schenkerian apparatus to model the modus of temporality that Kant calls *persistencia*.<sup>6</sup> I have already mentioned the logical claim: many commentators who purport, through analysis based on leitmotiv, form, and associative key, to show the music’s relationship to the drama in this Wagnerian scene can be shown, in an important logical respect, to do exactly the opposite.<sup>7</sup> There are at least two benefits of pointing out this logical inconsistency. Doing so sensitizes us to subtle differences between the types of (especially temporal) claims that different analytical technologies can make, and it leads us to fine-tune our assertions about what types of dramatic scenarios our music-analytic claims may apply to, or generate, or capture. My third claim is methodological: to the extent that a prolongational approach can illuminate a passage of music from *Tristan*, we may reasonably expect that passage of music reciprocally to throw light on the concept of prolongation. Once having wrested the Schenkerian apparatus from its traditional (“absolute,” instrumental, eighteenth-century) domain in order better to understand a passage of mature Wagnerian opera, we may find ourselves in a position to understand what types of claims a more traditional Schenkerian analysis typically makes. My hope is to return to those tools as if to know them for the first time.

In order to set these issues in relief, the remaining four parts of the paper are laid out somewhat unconventionally. Parts II and III both subdivide into two subsections (a and b). The a-section of each part consists of a close reading of the famous passage on the poetic-musical period from Wagner’s *Opera and Drama*, and the b-section of each part consists of a close reading of the beginning of Act II of *Tristan*.<sup>8</sup> Part IIa deliberately considers only the first half of the passage of prose, and our first pass

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6 For the three modi of time see Kant ([1781] 1998), esp. the “Analogies of Experience” (295–298). For time in general as the condition for the possibility of sense experience see “The Transcendental Aesthetic,” Second Section (162–7 and 178–84).

7 Exactly how this aporia arises depends on arguments to be made below (Parts II and III). Suffice to say here that it concerns the rub between, on the one hand, the inability of certain music-analytic systems to account for the modus *persistencia*, and on the other, dramatic claims—supposedly predicated on these music-analytic ones—that require it.

8 The passage occurs in Wagner ([1851] 1995, 291–295). It is re-translated and reproduced in full in Grey (1995, Appendix 1, 375–377), the translation and pagination of which I use below. *Opera and Drama* was originally published in 1851, around the time Wagner started working on *Das Rheingold*, and the poetic-musical period is usually invoked in response to the first three *Ring* operas. According to most commentators the dramatic argument of *Tristan* is more symphonic than textual, and represents a turn away from the theories he outlined in *Opera and Drama*, toward (a more Schopenhauerian) one in which music carries the drama. See Magee (2000, 102, 210–11 and 228) and Bailey (1969, 6).

Ultimately, whether *Tristan* was composed according to the theory set forth in *Opera and Drama* is immaterial for present purposes, since what I am arguing has little to do with whether the notion of the poetic-musical period governed the composition

through the music (Part IIb) goes only as far as that incomplete reading enables. (Implicit in this artifice is the claim that many earlier commentators have leaned too heavily upon this first half of the passage of prose.) The analysis carried out in Part IIb, though superficially satisfactory, nevertheless contradicts an important part of our experience of the drama since, by disavowing levels, it posits a succession of changing events (keys) without accounting for the possibility of something persisting behind that succession—a deeper, stable reality. In Part IIIa, I examine the second half of the passage from *Opera and Drama* in order to see if and how it might be able to resolve precisely this issue of succession and persistence. I argue that whether or not Wagner had something like a prolongational approach in mind—or whether, if he did, he could articulate it in the terms we have become familiar with from Schenker’s writings—from one perspective his theory requires something like prolongation in order to be coherent.<sup>9</sup> This reading of Wagner grounds the prolongational analysis of Part IIIb, the goal of which is to provide a music analysis whose logical relationship to the dramatic meaning is sound. Part IV leaves both *Opera and Drama* and *Tristan* behind, and is concerned with the relationship between the types of claims I make in Part III and the types of claims traditional Schenkerian analysis tends to make. Its aim is to show that the relationship of a prolongational span to events that occur within it can be analogized to the relationship between Kant’s notion of temporal persistence and the events that occur in perception. Part V offers some valedictory observations.

## IIa. WAGNER’S POETS AND COMPOSERS

Wagner’s discussion of the *dichterisch-musikalische Periode* is one of the most famous passages in his theoretical output.<sup>10</sup> The elusive and disputed concept, which has served as the foundation for an enormous amount of scholarship since its appropriation by Alfred Lorenz, addresses the relationship

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of a specific operatic scene and much to do with its prescient adumbrations of a hierarchical conception of harmony, especially how such a notion of harmony might work in concert with a dramatic scenario. Nevertheless, for evidence that suggests that ideas from *Opera and Drama* still had purchase during the composition of *Tristan*, see the fragment “über Modulation,” which appears in the *Tristan* sketchbook (1856); Abbate discusses it in “Wagner, ‘On Modulation’, and ‘Tristan’” (1989, 38 and n. 14), and Magee writes in *The Tristan Chord* that “by the time Wagner came to write *Tristan* he had absorbed [the tenets of *Opera and Drama*] so thoroughly into his compositional practice that he applied them unconsciously—and therefore they are still to be found throughout the texture of his later operas” (2000, 232 and 240).

9 This is not to cast an intentionalist argument by grounding my analytic observations in Wagner’s own theory. For one (though his words are often suggestive along these lines), I do not mean to suggest that in 1851 Wagner was explicitly aware of any sort of hierarchical approach to creating or understanding music(al meaning), or that in 1858 he intentionally wove the “multi-leveled” story I tell below into his musical fabric. I only mean to make the point that his text can be seen to support such a claim, or perhaps to be supplemented by one, in the Derridean sense. For another, attempting to ground observations in Wagnerian theory is *a priori* a precarious endeavor, since his theory is often so intensely self-contradictory—even in the space of a single book or essay. Thomas S. Grey has written that “Wagner’s texts...give new meaning (so to speak) to deconstructive adages about the undecidability of textual meaning, its ‘iterability’ and endless dissemination, the inevitability of misreading, as well as the fundamental metaphoricity of language...might also come to mind, especially the longer one immerses oneself in the toils of Wagnerian syntax” (1995, xvi). Barry Millington quips, in regards to incompatible readings of scholars who make intentionalist appeals in Wagner research, that “one of the glories of Wagner...is that like the Bible itself he can be quoted in support of most arguments” (1992, 268). See also Magee (2000, 141) and Cook (2007, 219).

10 For discussion of the concept see Grey (1995, 181–242), Darcy (1993, 51–55), and Abbate (1989, 38ff. and n. 14), who provides an instructive comparison of the concept to the fragment “über Modulation.”

that obtains between harmonic modulation, on the one hand, and text setting and dramatic action on the other.<sup>11</sup> Here we read only the first half of the passage, in order to show the points of contact between that incomplete reading and a set of analyses of *Tristan*. The goal of this preliminary reading will be to understand how, for Wagner, the addition of music to text can enrich its temporality, especially by providing the possibility for *return*. Wagner writes:

Alliterative verse [*Stabreim*], as we have seen, already connects speech roots of varied or contrasted expression (such as *Lust* and *Leid*, *Wohl* and *Weh*) so as to make the connection audible to our sense of hearing, and in this way also presents these roots to the feeling as generically related. Imagine, then, to what greater degree of expression these connections can be made sensually perceptible to our feeling with the help of musical modulation. Let us take for example a line of *Stabreim* containing a perfectly unified range of expression: *Liebe gibt Lust zum Leben* [love gives pleasure to life]. Since the alliteration of accented syllables in this line is matched by a perfect congruity of emotional content, the musician would have no occasion to depart from his initially chosen tonality in setting these words; a fully adequate musical setting would need to take account only of the strong and weak syllables, while remaining within a single key, appropriate to the emotional unity of the text. If, on the other hand, we take a line of mixed emotional significance, such as *die Liebe bringt Lust und Leid* [love brings pleasure and sorrow], the musician would need to match the contrasting emotions of the alliterated words by modulating from his original tonality into a contrasting, related one appropriate to the contrasting sense of the final word. The word *Lust*, representing the furthest extreme of the original emotion, seems to press across to the contrasting emotion, and it would acquire in our new phrase an entirely different emphasis than it had in the original line, *Liebe gibt Lust zum Leben*: the note to which the word *Lust* is sung would naturally tend to function as a leading-tone [*Leitton*], determining and necessarily drawing us into the new tonality appropriate to the expression of sorrow [*Leid*]. In their relative positions, *Lust* and *Leid* would be enabled to communicate a particular emotion, the peculiar nature of which would result precisely from their point of contact, the point at which two opposed feelings are represented as mutually conditioned by and thus as related to one another, necessarily belonging together. This kinship can only be communicated through music and its capacity for harmonic modulation, by means of which it exercises a compelling force on our senses and feelings attainable through no other art.

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Modern (post-Lorenz) scholars writing on this passage disagree in regards to the level at which it is applicable. Thus Abbate (rehearsing Dahlhaus) argues that “the misunderstanding of Wagner’s minute scale of modulation [a “making monstrous” of Wagner’s intended meaning] has had a profound effect on Wagnerian reception in the twentieth century, through the agency of Lorenz” (1989, 41), but this view is tempered in Grey (1995, 206–210). Roger Scruton critiques Lorenz’s appropriation of the concept first on the philosophical grounds that “a periodic analysis of Wagner’s opera—showing the key center and the thematic and episodic symmetries within each period—would actually provide...an explanation of our experience of unity only if the existence of sustained tonal centers and thematic and harmonic symmetries were a sufficient condition for musical unity” (2004, 107), and then on experiential grounds (108).

11 “Elusive” and “disputed” are from Grey (1995). Lorenz was not the first critic to use the concept, see Köhler (1853) (cited in Grey 1995, 191). Other scholars to discuss the passage are listed in Grey (1995, 210).

—Let us consider first how the musical modulation, in conjunction with the poetic verse, is able to lead back to the original feeling. —Suppose that our original line, *die Liebe gibt Lust zum Leben*, were to be followed by a second line: *doch in ihr Weh auch webt sie Wonnen* [but with its pain, it weaves also delight]. Here the word “weaves” [*webt*] would correspond to the leading-tone of the original key, as the second, contrasting emotion would at this point return to the original, yet now enriched key.<sup>12</sup>

Per his larger aesthetic goals, which at the time of *Opera and Drama* involved a synthesis of the various artistic media into a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Wagner here disenfranchises the signifying power of “words alone” in favor of a more robust type of meaning produced by the *combination* of words with music.<sup>13</sup> Through this medial coupling, texted music can create sophisticated cross- and back-references, creating a potential for non-linear or incongruent multiple meanings, dramatic irony, and sophisticated character psychology. Wagner emphasizes that words and music—whether or not they project the same emotional message—work hand-in-hand to create a richer meaning than either of them could achieve in isolation. And these are exactly the claims made by the scholars who have used this passage as a jumping-off point for their analyses of Wagner’s music.<sup>14</sup>

Particularly important for our purposes is the type of “script” that Wagner posits to showcase the amplified signifying power of texted music: that of *departure-and-return* (see Figure 1). This script is so important because, at least in this hypothetical case, Wagner imagines that the limitation of the lonely poet (*Dichter*) consists in his inability to show a sensuous return to one state after a departure from it, especially where that return is contradicted by his alliterative verse.<sup>15</sup> To be clear, a poet can show a return of sorts, but its status as (merely) conceptual means it exists on a lower ontological plane.<sup>16</sup> The

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12 Grey (1995, 375). Note the similarity of this text to Isolde’s “Leben und Tod sind unterthan ihr, die sie webt aus Lust und Leid, in Liebe wandelnd den Neid” from the final dialogue of Act II Scene 1, mm. 389–402.

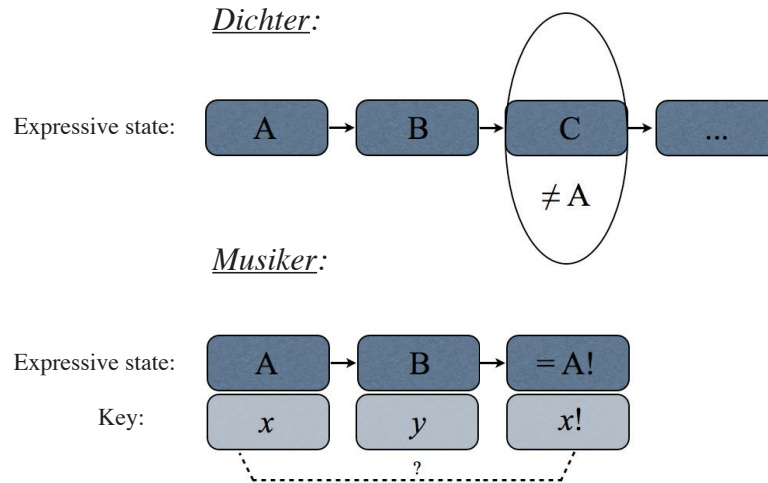
13 The important difference between these two media that has not been sufficiently fleshed out in the literature is that between conceptual and non-conceptual content, meaning and sense-experience (presence), representation and will. Wagner is creating a binary between, on the one hand, text = language = conceptual knowledge = meaning, and, on the other, music = non-conceptual knowledge = presence. *Opera and Drama* (1851) antedates Wagner’s exposure to the work of Schopenhauer (he first read *The World as Will and Representation* in October of 1854), but Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington remind us that “intimations of Schopenhauer’s ideas from the period before October 1854...should not surprise us: not only was Wagner ripe in his outlook on life for this revelation, but also Schopenhauer was already being read and discussed within Wagner’s circle of friends” (1988, 163). The division comes ultimately from Kant, in whose critical philosophy “Wagner and Schopenhauer shared a common intellectual ancestry” (Scruton 2004, 122–126). For a succinct summary of Schopenhauer’s concept of the will and its relation to the nonconceptual and to music in specific, see Scruton (2004, 76).

14 Matthew Bribitzer-Stull’s (2004) study on associative *thematic* (not harmonic) irony in Wagner’s *Ring* isolates precisely this notion of incongruity as the condition for the possibility of irony.

15 “The poet, by means of his *Stabreim*, can only represent this return to our sensible and emotional faculties as a unified progression from pain [*Weh*] to delight [*Wonnen*], but not as a *return* to the genus of feeling originally represented by the word ‘love’” (Grey 1995, 376), my emphasis. Compare Ashton-Ellis’s rendering: “the Poet, in virtue of his *Stabreim*, could only display this return as an advance from the feeling of ‘*Weh*’ to that of ‘*Wonnen*’, but not as a rounding-off of the generic feeling ‘*Liebe*’” (Wagner [1851] 1995, 293).

16 “The poet indicates such a familial relationship only through the *meaning* of his verse: he still longs to realize this connection for the feelings, and this is precisely the task he sets for the musician... The complete realization of this [poetic] intent is only

Figure 1. A Departure-and-Return Script



text-setting musician (*Musiker*), on the other hand—by returning to a key previously endowed with meaning—can create a sensuous return and thereby “realize the poetic intent” completely.

Figure 1 renders the state of affairs schematically: the poet’s single medium, language, cannot be counted on to create a sensuous return, especially where the words that denote the two related emotional states are not related by *Stabreim*—“state C” ≠ “state A.” But the *Musiker*, who marshals in addition to language a series of meaningful musical keys, can exploit this two-tiered model to create a true sense of return, regardless of the alliterative relation between words.<sup>17</sup> Even in the situation at hand, where the voiced labiodental fricative *Wonne*n contradicts the alveolar lateral approximants *Lust* and *Liebe*, the identity of key *x* to key *x*, creates an identity between the first and third expressive states.

It seems clear enough that the meaning engendered by the combination of words with music can go far beyond the meaning made possible by either of those media in isolation; something like this is clearly responsible for the expressive power of Wagner’s (and so much other) art. And yet, this first half of Wagner’s text remains mute on some crucial questions about the medial marriage. Precisely what is the “peculiar relationship,” one wonders, between the original key (“*x*,” in Figure 1) and each of the subsequent keys in a musical passage? What is the relationship of the second “key *x*” and the expressive state it engenders (marked “A!”) to the first one, to which in Figure 1 it is connected by a dotted line with a question mark?

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possible for the musician, in his capacity to apply the inner relation of all notes and tonalities [through modulation] to the perfectly unified communication of the original related emotions to our feeling” (Grey 1995, 376), Wagner’s emphasis.

17 “The musician, on the other hand, can intelligibly connect the whole pair of lines by *returning* to the original key, distinctly indicating the familial relationship between the contrasting emotions—an impossibility for the poet, who must continually alternate the alliterative syllables of his *Stabreim*” (Grey 1995, 376), my emphasis.

These relationships can be made clear by invoking the three modi of time set forth in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>18</sup> Borrowing Kant's vocabulary may seem fanciful—not least because for him these are *a priori* epistemological, and not aesthetic, categories—but there are two major benefits of framing the discussion in these terms.<sup>19</sup> The first benefit is that isolating three distinct temporal modi provides some tools to address the two questions posed above: in the succession of musical keys represented in Figure 1, the initial key *x* is a point of departure. The three keys are treated successively—each one leaving behind the preceding one—until a return to the original key effects a concomitant return to an original expressive or emotional state. By themselves, the keys and the expressive states thus both traffic in the modus *succession*: first *x*, then *y*, then *x*; first A, then B, then A. Since the two domains interanimate—since at every stage both the keys and the text are necessary for this enhanced kind of meaning—they also activate the modus *simultaneity*: at time point 1, *x* is simultaneous with A, and so on.<sup>20</sup> Cast in these terms, the added signifying power of texted music inheres in the fact that Wagner's *Musiker* adds simultaneity to his *Dichter*'s succession.

The second benefit of couching our reading in these Kantian terms is that it leads us to ask what could provide the *persistence* that would serve as the ground for those two “later” modi, and how that first, grounding modus might be accounted for in a musical model.<sup>21</sup> Answers to these questions depend on arguments still to come, and Part IIb brackets them in order to focus on the relationship between the departure-and-return script and a passage of texted music that it seems to map nicely onto. We will see that Wagner's operatic composer—as we have so far characterized him—may indeed paint a fuller picture than his lonely poet can, but that nevertheless he cannot address at least one essential aspect of a certain dramatic scenario.

### IIb. *TRISTAN, FIRST PASS.*

The first dialogue from Act II Scene 1 of *Tristan und Isolde* (mm. 105–199) exemplifies the above issues and, because of its popularity among analysts, also provides an excellent case study.<sup>22</sup> It features

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18 The three modi of time—simultaneity, succession, and persistence—are treated in the three “Analogies of Experience” (Kant [1781] 1998, 295–320). These “three rules of all temporal relations of appearances, in accordance with which the existence of each can be determined with regard to the unity of all time, precede all experience and first make it possible” (296). Crucial for this paper is the first of the Analogies, which concerns the necessity of *persistence* for forming objective time-determinations, indeed, for perceiving anything at all. Henry Allison calls this the “backdrop thesis”: “something at least relatively persisting is required as a substratum or backdrop in relation to which change can be experienced” (2004, 237). “If there were nothing that persists, if everything were in constant flux, then we could not even be aware of succession as such, not to mention simultaneity. Consequently, an enduring, perceivable object (or objects) is required to provide the backdrop or frame of reference by means of which the succession, simultaneity, and duration of appearances in a common time can be determined” (239).

19 For a precedent that brings these concepts to bear on Schenker's organicism, see Korsyn (1988).

20 Kant commentator P. F. Strawson would say of this enrichment that “a mere temporal succession of representations, of the form Now A, now B, now C, etc.” becomes “*here*, now A, etc.” (1966, 127).

21 “Later,” since persistence is the condition for their possibility; see footnote 18.

22 The excerpt is the first of three dialogues between Isolde and her maid, Brangäne, all of which center around the question whether or not the torch should remain lit or be extinguished. Each of the three dialogues traces a departure from and return to the dominant of B $\flat$ ; the three taken together constitute a large, Lorenzian *Bar form* (A–A–B). See Chafe (2005, 176–193) on the

three modulations—marked by rehearsal numbers on Example 1—to keys endowed with specific dramatic meaning, and as a whole the keys are deployed in a script of departure and return. Further, each of the keys is productively understood in the associative sense, that is, they have been charged with certain objective referents.<sup>23</sup> Some of the meaning they have accrued is “intra-textual”—it arises within the bounds of the work itself. Some of the meaning they suggest is “extra-textual”—it exists within a community of shared semantic connotations, whether construed from the point of view of a group of composers, receivers, or a collection of musical texts themselves.<sup>24</sup>

Here are the relevant details of plot<sup>25</sup>: the princess Isolde, though she is in love with Tristan, is betrothed to King Marke, Tristan’s uncle. Before the curtain rises on Act I, Tristan has been charged with bringing the princess home to his uncle’s kingdom in Cornwall, which order he obeys out of duty to Marke, and despite his own love for Isolde. At the end of Act I, and just before reaching port, the two lovers drink a powerful love potion, and are so taken over by it that they are unable to perceive the objective world that surrounds them.<sup>26</sup> This is, of course, a problem for the couple, but by Act II it is not their only problem: Tristan’s Janus-faced friend, Melot, who knows of the lovers’ secret relationship, has betrayed the hero by pressuring the King to stage an *ersatz* hunt. Acting upon Melot’s plan the King and his hunting party leave the castle by night, professing not to return until the following day, but secretly planning to return early, in order to catch Tristan and Isolde in their putative late-night tryst.

When the curtain rises on Act II (one measure before the beginning of the excerpt given in Example 1), a sextet of onstage horns, hidden just behind the curtain, intones a hunting call that prolongs an F<sup>7</sup> chord.<sup>27</sup> The stage directions read: “Hunting calls [*Jagdgetön*]. [Isolde’s maid] Brangäne, standing on the steps, spies the departing hunting party, whose tones are still audible.” Now, the love-sick and tremendously impatient Isolde, waiting for the hunting party to disappear into the woods, has planned to meet Tristan at the moment the party’s hunting horns can no longer be heard in the distance, at which

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form and meaning of the scene as a whole. The passage is also discussed in Abbate (1991, 131–134), Brinkmann (1978), Kurth (1923, 401–407), Newcomb (1989), and Scruton (2004, 51–52 and 112–113).

23 Though earlier commentators often discuss associative keys in this piece—see, e.g., Chafe (2005) and Scruton (2004)—none of them considers the semantic potential of the keys systematically. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that associative tonality is an under-discussed topic in *Tristan* compared to many of Wagner’s other operas.

24 Associative tonality of the “extra-textual” type is coterminous with what we typically call “key characteristics,” that is, a set of referents which in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were associated with different keys. The best introduction to, as well as collection of, historical key characteristics remains Steblin (2005). For a precedent for my division of associative tonality into intra- and extra-textual, see Treitler (1989).

25 A translation of the libretto by Andrew Porter can be found in Wagner (1981).

26 See, for instance, upon Marke’s boarding of the docked ship, Tristan’s “Wer naht?” [His servant] Kurwenal: “Der König!” T: Welcher König?,” at Act I, mm. 1908ff. See also the stage directions, such as at I, m. 1879 “Tristan and Isolde remain lost in their reciprocal gaze, without perceiving [*Wahrnehmung*] what is taking place around them,” or at I, m. 1884: “[Brangäne] places the royal robe on Isolde, without her noticing it [*die es nicht gewahrt*].” Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

27 Roger Scruton (2004, 51–2) notices that because of the sometime 9<sup>th</sup>, G, the pitch constituency of the horns contains a C minor chord, which plays out against F that is sounded in the rest of the orchestra, but he doesn’t point out the first pitch in Horn 6, which is also the lowest pitch and played *fortissimo* on the downbeat, is an F. Further, he does not attribute, as I will, the C minor of the upper horns to the key of death, but rather connects it to the C major that ended Act I.



Example 1. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II mm. 76–199

## Scene I.

76 (Horns behind the curtain)

ff trem. pp

V/Bb

80

84

87

90

V/Bb

Example 1 continued. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II mm. 76–199

(Isolde, fervently emotional, steps out of the chamber toward Brangäne)

DIALOGUE I (to m. 199)

Example 1 continued. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II mm. 76–199

108

I.

fern der Klang.

111

(On the Stage)

V/Bb

114

Brangäne (listening)

Noch sind die nah;

117

B.

deutlich tönt's da-her.

*dim. sempre*

Example 1 continued. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II mm. 76–199

120 *(Isolde listens)*

124 *dolciss.*

129 *Isolde*

I. Sor - gen-deFurcht be-irrt dein Ohr;

133

I. dich täuscht des

Example 1 continued. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II mm. 76–199

137

I. Lau - bes - säu-selnd Ge - tön, das

141

I. Brangäne  
B. la - chend schüt - telt der Wind. Dich täuscht des

144

Wun - sches Un - ge - stüm zu ver - neh - men, was du

147 (She [Brangäne] listens)

B. wähnst.

*fp* *cresc.* *f*

V/B $\flat$

Example 1 continued. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II mm. 76–199

152 **1**

B. Ich hö - re der Hör - ner Schall.

157 **2**

I. Isolde  
Nicht Hör-ner-schall

166

I. tönt so hold; des Quel-les sanft rie - seln-de Wel - le

c: = Ger°3

V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> — 5 — 3

i  
c: AC

(Isolde listens)

pp

c: ----- Db: V<sup>9</sup>

Example 1 continued. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II mm. 76–199

172

I. 

178

I. 

181

I. 

184 3

I. 

$D\flat: = V^7$  -----  $B\flat: = V_5^6$

Example 1 continued. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II mm. 76–199

187

I. mei - - ner harrt in

190

I. schwei - gen - der Nacht, als ob

194

I. Hör - ner noch nah' dir schallten , willst du ihn

197

I. fern mir hal - ten?



time she will extinguish a nearby torch, providing Tristan with a signal that it is safe to approach.<sup>28</sup> Her maid, Brangäne, tries to watch the party from atop a watchtower in order that Isolde not err and extinguish the torch before they have disappeared, but the scene ends tragically. The swooning Isolde, over-eager to be back in the arms of her lover, will at its end extinguish the torch, oblivious to the fact that the metonymic hunting horns, and along with them of course the hunting party, have not truly left the castle grounds.

At this moment, then, we have on stage two individual subjectivities, one the voice of reason, and the other, of unreason. The excerpt's three modulations, which lead ultimately from the dominant of B $\flat$  major back to it, are tied up with these subjectivities in a striking way: it is as if the characters themselves create their tonalities as they go.<sup>29</sup> In support of this point one could marshal an element of Wagner's art that is often overlooked or presupposed in analyses: the stage directions (rendered bold in Example 1). The fact that even those stage directions that would not necessarily be visible to an audience—such as “Isolde listens”—are placed so carefully into the score, in addition to supporting a reading that posits compositional agency on the part of the characters, is also indicative of the inward, psychological nature of the Wagnerian music drama.

The first modulation, at m. 151, is quite simple: Brangäne, who has been holding the tonality steady on the dominant of B $\flat$  major, quickly rocks the tonality to C minor, a signal that Isolde, “deluded by the forcefulness of [her] desire into hearing only what [she] will,” is tempting death in her reckless disregard of reality.<sup>30</sup> This is a pointed example of foreshadowing, since C minor, traditionally (extra-textually) associated with sadness, pathos, gloominess, and lamentation, has intra-textually gathered the specific referent “death.”<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the F $^7$  chord, which prolongs the dominant of B $\flat$ , is not without its own extra-textual meaning: it can be taken here to signify the pastoral, the garden in summer, and,

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28 The torch as a symbol is, of course, associated with light, and therefore day, reason, honor, and Brangäne. Relevant symbolic binaries are darkness, night, delusion, illicit love, and Isolde. The day/night binary is treated especially nicely in Chafe (2005, 176ff.), Scruton (2005, 51 and *passim*), and Magee (2000, ch. 12).

29 Abbate makes this point in *Unsung Voices*: “[Isolde] is no longer deaf to music that we can hear, for she has imagined it and created it, and in this is momentarily celebrated as the locus of authorial discourse. ... [Isolde] is a composer who eventually surpasses her teacher, Tristan” (1991, 131). Abbate imagines something similar in regards to the writing of *text* in this opera in her “Wagner, ‘On Modulation’ and ‘Tristan’” (1989, 48). Chafe (2005), too, traffics in these types of observations. Compare Schoenberg who writes that Cherubino “accompanies himself and is also the author of the poem. Has he not also composed the music?” (1969, 69).

30 The shifts of key up to this point in the act occur only in conjunction with Isolde's voice or some stage direction that calls attention to her. The clearest example of this is also the first; see how at m. 105 Isolde's excited “Hörst du sie noch? Mir schwand schon fern der Klang” radically rewrites the predominantly diatonic music of the scene's beginning, and how the introduction of the chromatic texture (along with the so-called “desire” motive) does not begin with her spoken text, but rather with the stage directions at m. 102: “Isolde, fervently emotional, steps out of the chamber toward Brangäne” [Isolde tritt, feurig bewegt, aus dem Gemach zu Brangäne]. See also each of the directions “Isolde listens,” such as at m. 122, and the way Brangäne, in an effort to make her hearing conform to reality, wrenches the key back to B $\flat$  at mm. 143–147.

31 Recall that the perilous C minor chord has already been present in the horn-calls themselves, as a subset of their sometime F $^9$  chord. In *Tristan*, C minor is associated with death only up to this point; Chafe points out that the second death motive, which “arises at the onset of night in act 2,” is in A $\flat$ , “the key of night in *Tristan*, replacing the C minor of the death motive in act 1” (2005, 138). A $\flat$  is, extra-textually, associated with “slumber, darkness, and death” (Steblin 2005, 230–234).

when coupled with that musical topic (as, *passim* throughout the scene), the hunting horns themselves.<sup>32</sup> Chafe notes that the key of B $\flat$  may have been chosen “because of its association with day in act 1,” which means that intra-textually, we may add to all the above the referent of reasoned, objective reality, and along with it, the phenomenal realm in general.<sup>33</sup>

As for the modulation itself, the F<sup>7</sup> chord, which might in harmonic terms be seen as a pivot—simultaneously V<sup>7</sup> and a borrowed flavor of IV<sup>7</sup> in C minor—here moves to a cadential  $\frac{6}{4}$  in C minor through two semitonal shifts in its outer voices. In Example 2, the voices that participate in this linear motion are presented with elongated stems. Referents are provided beneath the achievements of their signifying keys.

#### Example 2. The First Modulation

m. 151 Brangäne: "The horns, I hear them still"

B $\flat$ : V<sup>7</sup> "Hunting Horns"  
"Day"

c: Ger<sup>-3</sup>

V $\frac{6}{4}$  ————— 5 ————— 3 ————— i  
c: AC "Death"

The next modulation, which Isolde effects immediately after Brangäne’s, is quite a bit more striking. As if seizing upon a literal interpretation of Brangäne’s last words—“It is you whose wild desires deceive you into hearing what you will”—Isolde construes the C-minor tonic just achieved, with all of its attendant semantic and proleptic baggage, as a dominant chord in D $\flat$  major! Example 3 shows this process in summary, along with two attempts to explain it. By “hearing what she will” Isolde subverts the signifying power C minor has accrued throughout the work. Through the simple sub-position of a

32 Chafe writes that “in Schopenhauerian terms the emphasis on the dominant mirrors Isolde’s dissatisfaction—unfulfilled desire” (2005, 178). B $\flat$  major is also given pastoral significance in the nature motive of Wagner’s last drama, *Parsifal*, in which it is also always deployed over a dominant pedal, see Act I, mm. 272–282. Steblin (2005, 258) cites the “hunting piece” as a characteristic of F major noted by Johann Philipp Kirnberger in his *Vermischte Musikalien* of 1769. The appellative tonic here is of course B $\flat$ , not F.

33 Chafe (2005, 176). It is not entirely clear which B $\flat$  Chafe is referring to, although a few moments in Act I do suggest a loose association with “day”-like referents (Tristan’s status as a hero, his honor), e.g., at I, mm. 344–358 and especially I, mm. 490–529. But Chafe’s book is famously difficult to navigate; as Patrick McCreless points out in a review, “it is by no means always easy to find the passages to which the author is referring. There are still one or two passages in the book in which I cannot, despite repeated efforts, figure out exactly where the music is that the text is describing” (2008, 68).



185. At m. 185, then, we have arrived *back* at the beginning, *back* at F<sup>7</sup>, at the hunting horns, day, and honor, and of course, at the phenomenal. And with this *return*, it seems we have analyzed the passage as a whole from the point of view of Wagner's theory of the semantically robust marriage of music to text.

But something doesn't jibe here. It is not merely that our associative tonal, formal, and instrumental approaches, which theoretically surpass an understanding limited to text alone, now prove to be as linear, at least, as Wagner's poet: The dominant of B $\flat$  modulates first to C minor, second to the dominant of D $\flat$  (or D $\flat$ ), and ultimately back to the dominant of B $\flat$ . Rather more immediately, it is that these claims seem actually to conflict in an important respect with the dramatic scenario. Brangäne is *right*: the hunting horns never actually leave the castle grounds.<sup>35</sup> What, then, are we to make of the disappearance of their key, instrumentation, and topic from the musical fabric? And this question takes us to the crux of the issue.

Whether from a motivic/iconic,<sup>36</sup> instrumental,<sup>37</sup> formal,<sup>38</sup> or associative tonal<sup>39</sup> perspective, analyses of this passage that appeal to "Lewin's maxim," that is, to an analog, no matter how slight, between music and drama, can all be shown to present a confused case, logically speaking. Though each author claims that his analyses of dramatic meaning follow upon the heels of, or work in concert with, his analyses of the music,<sup>40</sup> there remains in every case an unbridgeable gap between the two domains. The gap concerns the relationship of all these types of musical evidence to temporality, in the Kantian sense: none of the methods adduced above can show, from a strictly musical standpoint, the modus of time Kant calls persistence. Their musical claims, then, are perforce *not* homologous, at least in this important respect, to their dramaturgical ones. To be clear: the problem is not that critics are supplying dramatic claims that are "wrong," or that they are producing bad music analyses, in fact quite the contrary. The problem, which is not dramatic or musical but strictly logical, arises only when we make the claim that our musical observations can help us model this dramatic scenario, in which some things persist (the horns, the hunting party that plays them) while others do not (Isolde's

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35 At least this is how critics have viewed the passage, e.g., Chafe: "what Brangaene maintains is objectively true: the horns *can* be heard" (2005, 183). I am presenting that case forcefully for the moment, but we should be careful about the limits of our knowledge here—are we prepared to argue for certain one way or the other?

36 Scruton (2004); Newcomb (1989).

37 Brinkmann (1978); Abbate (1991); Scruton (2004).

38 Newcomb (1989); Chafe (2005).

39 Chafe (2005); Scruton (2004); our analysis thus far.

40 This is true even if Abbate seems to abjure such "tautologies" (1989, 37 and 42 n. 27), since she again presupposes their validity in her analysis (41ff.). Newcomb and Scruton are particularly clear:

As is usual with Wagner, this set of formal conventions is used not to satisfy any traditional generic requirements, but because of the closeness with which its musical events could parallel the dramatic events. Of course, all great composers of opera must find musical analogies for drama. But the interplay of the musical-formal conventions with the dramatic logic is in this instance particularly artful. (Newcomb 1989, 209)

Musical logic and emotional stress are inextricably woven together. [After the prelude to Act I] all musical development will be interpreted irresistibly by the listener in dramatic terms, while the drama will be bound in an intricate and logical symphonic argument. (Scruton 2004, 112)

changeable perceptions), and then we provide musical observations that traffic only in the temporal modi of succession and simultaneity.

The reason for this is most likely that our Wagner commentators (along with most spectators of the opera) know that Isolde is delusional and that the hunting party never leaves the castle grounds; that much is clear from the piece's libretto and stage directions.<sup>41</sup> The passage so clearly presents us with a fractured psyche that we do not see that our musical claims do not actually support the (already clear) dramatic scenario, but indeed have no such relation to them. It is only by being sensitive, on the one hand to the *logical* relationship between (good) music-analytic claims and (good) dramatic ones, and on the other hand to the limits of our music-analytic method, that an *aporia* becomes evident. If we were to bind the hands of our music analysts here, forcing them to make only those claims that are made possible within the bounds of their systems, and then activate the music→drama synapse, we would end up with dramatic nonsense. For what dramatic *return* can an analyst posit in good faith here? The key “returns” to B $\flat$ , or to its dominant; but do we thereby return to objective reality? Does Isolde? Had objective reality departed along with its key?

### IIIa. WAGNER AND PERSISTENCE

It is in an effort to answer these questions that we retrace our steps, first addressing the balance of the passage on the poetic-musical period, and afterwards reconsidering the scene from *Tristan* from a perspective sensitive to our new understanding of its *ethos*. The goals of this section are, first, to point up the divergence between my reading of this passage and the way it has been understood by other commentators who have taken it as a point of departure, and second, thereby to go further than they were able to, both identifying what an analysis that posits *persistence* might look like, and then fleshing out its musical and dramatic arguments.

Continuing from where he left off, Wagner seems to have a situation remarkably like Act II Scene 1 of *Tristan* in mind when he writes:

We can best picture for ourselves how immeasurably great is this capacity of the musician if we imagine the content of the above two-line example expanded to a larger scale: suppose that after leaving the original emotion of the first line, instead of returning to it already in the second line, a long series of other lines were to intervene, expressing the most varied intensification and mixture of intermediate emotional stages—some stronger, some more conciliatory—before finally returning to the affective point of departure [*Hauptempfindung*]. In order to realize the poetic intent of these lines the musical setting would modulate through the most varied tonalities; yet every key touched on would appear in its specific relation to the original key, which would condition the particular expressive light shed by these various other tonalities, to some extent making that light possible in the first place. The tonic key [*Haupttonart*], as the foundation of the initially represented emotion, would reveal its original relation to all other keys. For the

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41 Proof for this claim is offered by Ernest Newman ([1949] 1991, 243), who marshals only scant and passing musical evidence to make the same point.

length of its duration this tonic key would also communicate a determinate emotion in its fullest dimensions; our feeling would be affected only by this emotion and anything relating to it, by means of its expanded scope, and this particular emotion would thereby be raised to an all-encompassing, universally human and unfailingly perceptible level.

In this, we have described the poetic-musical period, as it is determined by a single principal tonality. On that basis, we could provisionally describe the most perfect art-work, viewed as a vehicle of expression, as that in which many such periods are presented in rich profusion, such that each is conditioned by the next in the realization of the highest poetic intent, evolving into a rich overall manifestation of human nature, distinctly and surely communicated to our feeling; this evolution proceeds so as to embrace all aspects of human nature, just as the principal key may be understood to embrace all other possible keys.<sup>42</sup>

Metaphysical this passage may be, but among other things it suggests that Wagner's keys, like his poetic texts, are above all not to be taken in temporal succession. Quite the contrary, it is immediately clear that neither an associative, nor any other model predicated on successive or simultaneous temporal claims, can do justice to Wagner's aims. Figure 2 represents the state of affairs graphically. Its top half shows the successive, departure-and-return script suggested by the first half of the passage from *Opera and Drama* (and modeled in Part IIa). Its bottom half, in an attempt to be truer to the goals of the passage as a whole, posits *persistence*, of both a key and a corresponding expressive state.

A close reading of Wagner's prose suggests that the poetic-musical period requires persistence, whether or not one argues that Wagner is actually suggesting something like a prolongational model of music. The potential of the single clause that might be adduced to refute this claim, "For the length of

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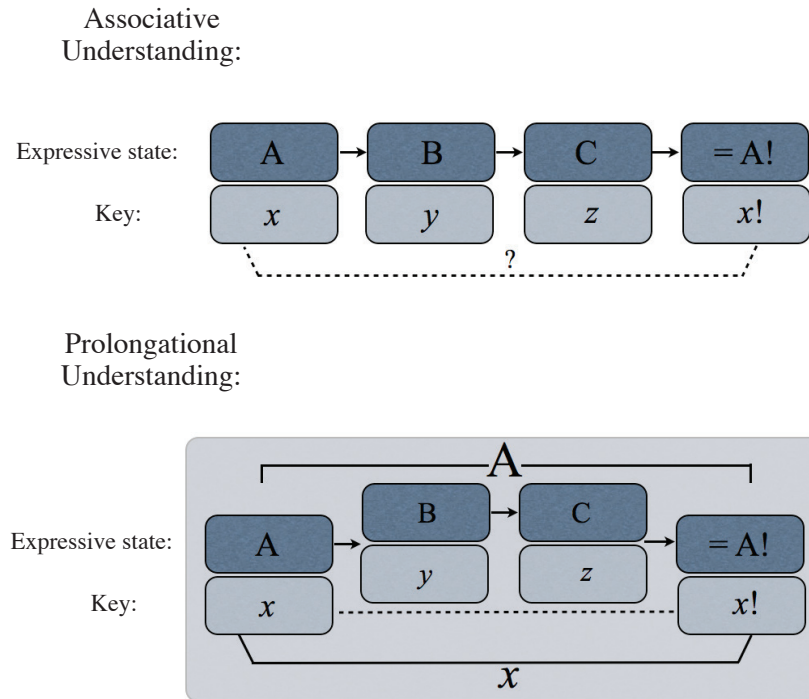
42 Grey (1995, 376–377). Though in this section I focus only on the passage from *Opera and Drama*, I point out in passing the remarkably similar sentiment expressed by Wagner in a letter to Mathilde Wesendonck during the composition of *Tristan*. Its relationship to the passage from *Opera and Drama* has perhaps been overshadowed by the fact that this letter contains the famous claim about the "art of transition," a claim that has become foundational for analysts of Wagner's music in general:

I am now becoming increasingly aware of a quality which I have acquired in my art, since it also determines me in my life. From the very beginning it has been a part of my nature for my moods to change rapidly and abruptly from one extreme to another: states of extreme tension, after all, can scarcely do otherwise than impinge on each other; indeed, it is because of this that we are so often able to preserve our own lives. By the same token, true art, has basically no other object than to show these heightened moods in their extreme relation to each other: the only thing that can matter here—the important decision—is the result solely of these extreme contrasts. In the case of art, however, the material use of these extremes may well result in a pernicious mannerism which may degenerate to the level of a straining after superficial effects.... I recognize now that the characteristic fabric of my music (always of course in the closest association with the poetic design), which my friends now regard as so new and so significant, owes its construction above all to the extreme sensitivity which guides me in the direction of mediating and providing an intimate bond between all the different moments of transition that separate the extremes of mood.

Letter of 29 October, 1859, reproduced in Spencer and Millington (1988, 477).

Then again, the sentiment is not unique to Wagner or to the nineteenth century. Similar theoretical stances are taken both by Brahms, according to his student Gustav Jenner, and by Carl Schachter (1999, 143 and 157).

Figure 2. A Prolongational Model



its duration...” is neutralized in the following paragraph’s assertion that the poetic-musical period is determined by a “single principal tonality.”

To be in accord with both the second half of the passage on the poetic-musical period and the general desire to argue a dramatic point from music, then, we need to find a technology that can assert musical persistence. Whether or not in 1851 Wagner himself was arguing for something like prolongation turns out to be immaterial; if I am seeking a method that makes my appropriation of Wagner honest, then I require a model that can show prolongation.

It is in defense of this claim that we return now to the passage from *Tristan*, this time addressing the four-term departure-and-return scheme not from a “harmonic” or “functional” view of modulation, but rather from a more global hierarchical perspective, in order better to understand both the music and the drama. Through such an approach we begin to see Wagner’s display not only of the succession of surface keys—which we now see have a great deal of both intra- and extra-textual resonance—but of their relation to an overriding structural tonality, a notion we now see forms a part of his theoretical project.

### IIIb. *TRISTAN*, SECOND PASS

In light of all that has been argued thus far, and especially insofar as it can posit for the first time a homology between musical and dramatic meaning, Example 4 represents a step forward.<sup>43</sup> Unlike previous analyses (and like the schematic provided in Figure 2) it addresses each secondary key “in its specific relation to the original key, which would condition the particular expressive light shed by these various other tonalities, to some extent making that light possible in the first place.” Here, “the tonic key, as the foundation of the initially represented emotion, [reveals] its original”—and from this perspective *originary*—“relation to all other keys.” Not only does Example 4 expose the myopia inherent in construing the key associations successively alone, it also refutes dramaturgical claims based on that type of musical evidence *on logical grounds*: persistence is part and parcel of prolongation, built in to the model itself. Let us understand the sketch first, and then flesh out the dramatic claims it can make.

Example 4 renders the voice leading of the dialogue, up to the “re-achievement” of the key of B $\flat$ , graphically. *Ex hypothesi*, the complicated modulations from the dominant of B $\flat$  to C to D $\flat$  back to the dominant of B $\flat$  are surface events that occur within a higher-level prolongation of the dominant of B $\flat$ . Both C minor and D $\flat$  major, from this synoptic perspective, are seen to be illusory (which in no way diminishes their signifying power, either from the associative perspective or indeed from this synoptic perspective).<sup>44</sup> The key of D $\flat$ , like that of the “tonic” B $\flat$ , is summoned by its dominant, but does not appear. Though from the point of view of “key” the A $\flat$ <sup>7</sup> chord renders it present (through “appellation”), the fact that it exists only in first inversion strengthens the linear connection to the foundational F of the passage as a whole.<sup>45</sup>

At m. 161 Isolde begins to pull the conceptual upper voice C down into an inner voice, as if down into the depths of her own psyche; her descending sixth-progression outlines and strengthens the space between two of the governing pitches, C and E $\flat$ , even as it transfers their surface meaning from constituents of the dominant of B $\flat$  to constituents of the dominant of D $\flat$ . Put another way, Isolde mistakenly construes the persistent, objective  $\hat{2}$  and  $\hat{4}$  as  $\hat{7}$  and  $\hat{2}$ ; she *hears them as  $\hat{7}$  and  $\hat{2}$* . At m. 178 a prominent upper-voice D $\flat$  creates a neighbor note to the prolonged C. This neighbor note coincides with the “resolution” of the A $\flat$  dominant to a I $^{\circ}$  chord in D $\flat$  major, the bass pitch F both serving as the

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43 But Example 4 by no means claims comprehensiveness. In my view it at once neutralizes a problem posed by previous analyses and raises many more, for instance, what is the relationship of this dialogue to the second, which mirrors it so closely, down to individual key relations and voice-leading strategies? What is its relationship to the third, the Lorenzian *Abgesang*? Why should *Isolde*—and not Brangäne—sing the return to the dominant of B $\flat$  major at m. 185, and why should the horns not accompany this return?

44 Claims like this are often made by committed (orthodox) Schenkerians; Schachter (1999, 35; 2006, 301 and 314) for one, often appeals to the sensuous and meaningful surface from within the Schenkerian paradigm. For sketches of dramatic music that embed dramatic referents or motives, see Schachter’s discussion of the storm from Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony (1999, 173–174 and 224–225). For the concept of *Scheintonarten* (illusory keys) and its evolution in Schenker’s thought, see Schachter’s “Analysis by Key: Another Look at Modulation” (1999, esp. 144–150).

For a clear exposition of some of the differences between Schenker’s project and associative-tonal approaches stemming from the work of Robert Bailey, as well as an attempted rapprochement, see Britzner-Stull (2006).

45 Schachter would call it an “absentee tonic” (1999, 141).



beginning of two summative diatonic progressions in that key (see the brackets) and reinforcing the relationship of this illusory tonic to the dominants in which it is couched (both of the global B $\flat$  and of the more local D $\flat$ ).

At mm. 184–185 the dominant of D $\flat$  moves directly to the dominant of B $\flat$ , thereby completing the dialogue’s departure-and-return script. At this point there are no diegetic horns, only the key that we now know represents them. Indeed, from here until the horns so violently come back onto the scene, their topic and their key, where present, might most productively be understood as metonym alone.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, whether the horns have or have not disappeared is immaterial, since my points are only that most critics (including Brangäne) do indeed wish to prove that they are persistent, and that this can be shown through prolongational analysis. Whether we choose to understand the horns as literally or only as metonymically persistent, we will argue for this persistence not through the diegetic motive, the iconic *topic*, but through the background retention of a key charged with meaning.

Though in Example 4, for reasons of clarity, I have shown the two most important melodic lines (both conceptual inner voices) as third-progressions, they exist as an outgrowth of a far simpler contrapuntal device, the voice exchange (Example 5). This deeper middleground sketch clarifies: Wagner’s use of voice exchange is, not surprisingly, entirely linear and entirely chromatic; it is also typical of romantic voice leading. It renders the overall design of this prolongation equivalent to that of a composed-out omnibus, a progression Wagner “demonstrates a partiality for...from his first successful opera, *Rienzi* 1842 to *Parsifal* 1882.”<sup>47</sup>

But how can these musical relationships shine light on the drama itself? What good does it do the hermeneut or dramaturg to know that certain keys are more structurally important than others? The dramatic irony of the act so far comes to a head for the listener who recognizes that Isolde’s two non-tonic keys are both illusory. No matter how tonally distant C minor or D $\flat$  major seem to F<sup>7</sup> (the underlying harmony) or B $\flat$  (the underlying tonic), it is of the utmost dramatic importance to realize that from one perspective Isolde is not “really” achieving these keys, but rather that her solo exists only in

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46 It is at least conceivable that the physical, phenomenal hunting horns actually *have* disappeared, although their symbolic referents (day, reason, honor, danger) persist in the minds of Isolde and Brangäne. Thus Brangäne can “use” the horn topic, in its proper key, to warn Isolde of an entirely different danger, Melot, at m. 274, and Isolde, now even more impetuous, can borrow the topic in her distant D $\flat$  at mm. 283ff. in order to neutralize that danger. This reading is given support by stage directions and dynamic markings: the horns, marked *immer entfernter*, are *ff* at m. 76, *f* at m. 112, and *pp* at Isolde’s mistaking of them at m. 133. They are then *f* again at Brangäne’s warning, m. 147, and then *p*, *piu p*, and *pp* at Isolde’s solo, m. 151 et seq. (Cf. the opposite but remarkably similar *nearing* of the bells as Parsifal and Gurnemanz approach the Temple in the transformation music of Act III of *Parsifal*, mm. 796 ff.)

47 Yellin (1998, 42). Yellin notes that “Although Wagner continued to employ the omnibus to the end of his creative life, he subsequently bent and altered it to such a degree that it is often difficult to discern anything but a most personal harmonic expression. Yet close scrutiny and comparison with a hypothetical model would seem to point to the omnibus idea and to symmetrical inversion as the composer’s inspiration” (43). He mentions the music at Act II, mm. 151–155 as part of a traditional omnibus progression.

Robert Gauldin has also noted Wagner’s predilection for chromatic wedge progressions, although he argues that they “[do] not appear to play a significant role in [his] compositional technique until *Tristan*” (2004, 7). He identifies different (non-omnibus) types of wedges in *Tristan* on pp. 10ff.

Example 4. The Dialogue as a Whole

m. 151 161 165 178 182 185

(3rd prog. A-F)  
 (motion in an inner voice)  
 (c: = 3 V<sup>4</sup> 3 I) (Db: = V<sup>9</sup>: I<sup>7</sup> IV<sup>7</sup> V<sup>9</sup> V<sup>9</sup> I<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup>)  
 B: "The horns, I hear them still"  
 DEATH DELUSION  
 I: "No horn call could sound so sweet..."  
 (summary) (summary) (summary)  
 (Bb: = V<sup>6</sup>: I<sup>5</sup>)  
 (HORNS)  
 (3rd prog. F-A)  
 HORNS  
 5 3  
 5 3  
 Bb: V<sup>7</sup>

Example 5. A Composed-out Omnibus

m. 151 155 165 185

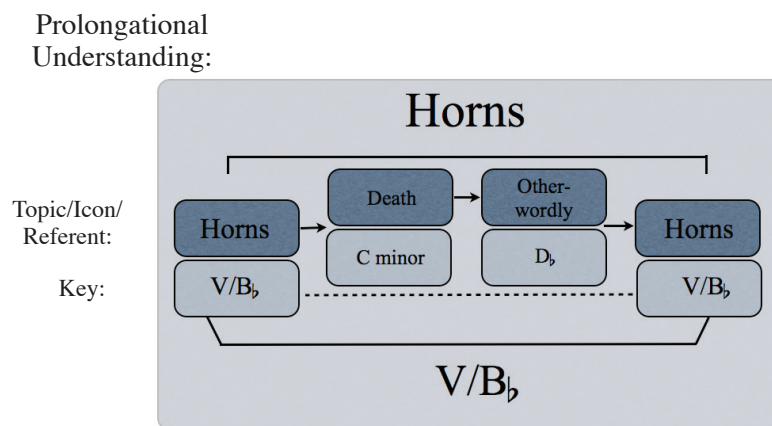
Bb: V<sup>7</sup>

relation to a more foundational reality, one that is represented by day and reason, here embodied in the voice of Brangäne.

The dramatic irony, of course, is inextricably intertwined with Isolde's psychology, and particularly with the relationship of her psychology to that of Brangäne and to the objective world. Over and above the extra-textual signifying power these keys have obtained historically, and above the signifying power particular keys have accumulated throughout the first act of the opera, to understand structural hierarchy adds yet another level of interpretive potential. Exactly as C minor and D $\flat$  major exist *within* a span of music governed by F $^7$ , Isolde's delusionary subjectivity exists *in* the world of reality. Even though Isolde may take her changes of key as being nothing short of actual, her Being-in-the-world is always just that, a subjective existence within an objective reality.<sup>48</sup>

This analysis is tied up with abstract questions about how a prolongational analysis might inform an analysis that seeks to understand tonal and topical signification on a hierarchical level. Specifically, how are we to interpret streams of different, even contradictory, signifiers, and which are we to privilege? Wagner's text suggests that at least in this case, understanding tonal hierarchy can provide a means for a more robust associative or topical analysis, since our knowledge that tonal significations are presented on different levels of structure has led us to interpret pairs of contradictory topics as working in productive tension. If a series of surface changes of key is subsumed beneath a conceptual prolongation of an overriding one, which is in this case both iconically and indexically charged, then the associative referents of each of those other keys may likewise be subsumable beneath that fundamental underlying tonal signifier. In Figure 3 the tonal referent "horns," which we now know stands for so much more, is present as a kind of global referent by virtue of its key, even absent that topical signifier.

Figure 3. Prolongation as Persistence



48 In Trietlerian terms, here we are modeling the dramatic motivation behind the modulations; in my analysis, Wagner, like Treitler's Beethoven, "composed with keys as a playwright with characters and plots" (Treitler 1989, 66). The irony here is that the proposed "formalist" analysis illuminates this composition in ways unavailable to Treitler, who disavowed organicist models because they "cannot cope with questions of motivation...[they] cannot say how and why things happen when and as they do" (56). For an instructive treatment of the gulf that separates Treitler and Schenker, as well as a proposed *via media* that hinges on "intra-textual" associative tonality, see McCreless (1990).

The formula for associative tonality—which is not at all to say that this is how it is carried out in practice—may be construed as a linear series of *key yields referent* operations:  $\text{key}_1 \rightarrow \text{ref}_1$ ;  $\text{key}_2 \rightarrow \text{ref}_2$ ; and so on. Our analysis addresses keys, and hence referents, hierarchically:  $\text{key}_2$  and  $\text{key}_3$  are subsumed under  $\text{key}_1$ , exactly as Wagner seems to have prescribed, and it is precisely this feature that fits the dramatic scenario so well. Not only does “every key touched on [appear] in its specific relation to the original key, which [conditions] the particular expressive light shed by these various other tonalities,” but every subsidiary referent likewise appears in a specific relation to an underlying, persistent (objective) state of affairs.

One final feature of Wagner’s music dramas bears discussion in this context, and this concerns their “interiority.” Bryan Magee writes of Wagner’s new genre that it “would be about the insides of the characters. It would be concerned with their emotions, not their motives. It would explore and articulate the ultimate reality of experience, what goes on in the heart and the soul.”<sup>49</sup> Roger Scruton (who in his *The Aesthetics of Music* makes a similar claim about music generally) tells us that *Tristan* is “not just a drama of passion: it plays out almost entirely in the subjective realm. . . . The meaning of their love. . . can be conveyed only if we can be led into the inner regions where it grows and flourishes—in other words, only if we can borrow the first-person perspective that is the unique possession of each.”<sup>50</sup>

Magee and Scruton are good readers of Wagner, and there is some truth to the idea that *Tristan*, among other operas (in general) provides insight into the inner workings of a character’s psyche in ways that cannot be captured, e.g., in language alone (see again Part IIa). But Wagner is not arguing for a drama made up by and taking place in some radically disembodied subjectivity. On the contrary, he is trying to find a way to address the insides of his characters as they respond to an objective external world, in the case of *Tristan* so clearly the world of day, honor, and so on. In Wagner, as well as in Schenker, this inner-outer dualism reduces ultimately to the transcendental idealist dualism between appearance and reality. Both thinkers rely upon the distinction: Wagner, in his desire to create a new type of drama out of the interaction of human psychologies with the objective world around them, and Schenker, in his attempt to capture the reality of music—as distinct from its appearance—in a model.<sup>51</sup> It is perhaps this common intellectual heritage that has made for such a productive marriage between analytical model and musical text.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, one reason the Schenkerian system was amenable to our dramatic scenario is precisely its ability to model idealist claims musically. Part IV is an attempt to better understand this ability.

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49 Magee (1969, 21). “Traditional drama,” for Wagner (for Magee), “depicts, for the most part, what goes on outside people, specifically what goes on *between* them. Its stuff is personal relationships. As for what goes on inside them, almost its only concern here is with their motives” (20–21).

50 Scruton (2004, 77). See also Scruton (1997).

51 For Schenker, “there is. . . a blatant contradiction between how the music is and how it sounds, between metaphysics and perception” (Cook 1995, 93).

52 Or perhaps the relationship is closer than that: Cook has argued that “Wagner [set] out the essential principles of Schenkerian theory; and he [did] so in 1869, when Schenker was just one year old” (1995, 101). For similarities between Wagner’s *music* and Schenker’s theory, see McCreless (1989).

#### IV. SCHENKER AND PERSISTENCE

Lewin's maxim, accepted by Wagner, the critics cited above, and myself, contains within it a double intentionality: our music-analytic claims aim at a better understanding of the drama, while our dramaturgical claims aim at a better understanding of the music. The prolongational analysis offered in Part IIIb—the goal of which was to confirm our dramatic intuitions more perfectly than could a handful of earlier ones—was informed by this double intentionality, and spoke to this paper's logical and analytic claims. But the third claim of this project, up to this point soft-pedaled in order to focus on the first two, concerns a different double intentionality: that which obtains between the Schenkerian apparatus and an extract of dramatic music. One of my original theses was that to the extent that a prolongational approach might throw light on a passage from *Tristan*, that passage might reciprocally illuminate the Schenkerian apparatus. Perhaps after having borrowed the method for both a style and a genre of music typically seen as outside its jurisdiction we can resituate it with respect to the claims it more typically makes about the music in its more circumscribed bailiwick.

What I am most interested in pointing out is that Example 4 is not *so* different from all the Schenkerian sketches out there, whether they treat dramatic (= texted) music, or instrumental music. Thus when Carl Schachter (who subscribes to Lewin's maxim) writes of the G-major dream music of Schubert's "Nacht und Träume," he invokes a musical appearance both distinct from the underlying reality (diatony) and existing within that reality's time span.<sup>53</sup> The same is true when he writes of the (only implicitly texted) "storm" movement of Beethoven's Sixth.<sup>54</sup> It seems clear that from a certain perspective the difference between Beethoven's F♯, Schubert's G major, and Isolde's D♭ major is only one of scope.

My point, however, is that when Schachter writes, for instance, of the second movement of Haydn's Symphony No. 99 that "there are G chords within prolongations of A minor, and A minor chords within prolongations of G" (2006, 307), he is dealing in the same *types* of music-analytic claims as in the Schubert, as in the Beethoven, as, ultimately, in the Wagner. Fundamental to the Schenkerian project—indeed, built into its premises as well as its graphic notation—is the distinction between appearance and reality, where reality consists of a temporal span governed by a single entity—a horizontalized dyad or triad—while (mere) appearances take place within that span.<sup>55</sup> (This is true, ultimately, at the *Ursatz* level as it is at each later level.)

In order to understand this we need not pursue Kant's philosophy of time in anything like the detail it was given in Kevin Korsyn's (1988) valuable study of Schenker's intellectual debt to Kant, mostly because Korsyn has already undertaken it. My conclusions are his conclusions: that "Schenker's work is saturated with Kant" (2), that "his theories are rooted in an epistemology that prioritizes time-

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53 "Only at 'wenn der Tag erwacht' does its insubstantiality become manifest; it vanishes, never to return except as an indistinct memory in the G's of the coda" (Schachter 1999, 217–18). See again Schachter's analysis of Schubert's "Ihr Bild," as well as of Brahms's "An eine Aolsharfe" in Schachter (2006, 306–309).

54 "Only when the F♯ turns silently into a G♭ and leads down to F do we begin to regain our bearings in the tonal milieu. For a moment, the storm was so severe that we failed to recognize our home, even though we were standing right in front of it" (1999, 182).

55 This is a fundamental premise from *Harmony* (1906) forward.

consciousness” (32), that “Schenker’s most common terms make sense when translated into terms of time-consciousness” (32), that, ultimately, to overlook Schenker’s concern with temporality is “fatal to any comprehension of his meaning” (50). But we need a change of focus.

Because of his emphasis on causality (as the source of Schenker’s organicism) Korsyn draws mostly on Kant’s *Second Analogy* (the “every-event-some-cause principle”<sup>56</sup>), and this points productively toward examining the relationship between a rule-based *Auskomponierung* in an organically unified composition and a rule-based time-consciousness in a transcendently unified apperceiver. Thus Korsyn has done the most difficult part of our work for us, by providing the grounds for a robust mapping between a transcendental subject’s time-consciousness and a musical work.<sup>57</sup>

This analogy between causality as the rule that governs the objective determination of successive events and causality as the rule that governs a succession of notes in an organically unified composition is instructive for many reasons. From a biographical standpoint it lays bare one of Schenker’s greatest intellectual debts; from an interpretive standpoint it helps us better understand his writings, analyses, and character; and from a broader historical perspective it situates nineteenth-century musical organicism in a philosophical context. What it downplays, or presupposes, is the role of persistence—in both Kant and Schenker—as the *condition for the possibility* of all time-determinations, whether successive or simultaneous. Succession and simultaneity are indeed governed by the principle of causality, and they are indeed the only two ways in which the objective world is given to us,<sup>58</sup> but it is the *modus persistence* that is the condition for their possibility. Thus the three Analogies are not analogous in this one sense: the first Analogy is prior to the latter two; it is their ground.<sup>59</sup>

Thus Korsyn is interested in showing *that* “each instant in a composition does not eclipse each previous instant; each tone does not exist by itself” (1988, 30); the reason for this is that in Schenker’s model, every note exists in a causal relation to every other note per Kant’s second Analogy. I am interested in showing *why* that is and can be the case: the reason is that the prolongational span provides the very persistence which makes this succession possible, provides its *substratum* or *backdrop*. In other words, it is the Schenkerian model’s capacity to show musical persistence that creates, internally, the

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56 Allison (2004, 246) cites as the origin of this term Lewis White Beck (1997). Kant calls the Second Analogy the “Principle of temporal sequence according to the law of causality” ([1781] 1998, 304). In the first edition the Analogy ran: “Everything that happens (begins to be) presupposes something which it follows in accordance with a rule.” For the second edition, Kant changed it to: “All alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect.”

57 “The *Ursatz* is a correlate of the transcendental self” (Korsyn 1988, 42; see also 23–24).

58 Strawson clarifies: “Now any time-relations whatever, and hence any objective time-relations, are fundamentally of two kinds: relations of succession and relations of simultaneous existence. . . . (The relation of temporal overlap can be analysed in terms of the two others.)” (1966, 129).

59 “Only in that which persists, therefore, are temporal relations possible (for simultaneity and succession are the only relations in time), i.e., that which persists is the **substratum** of the empirical representation of time itself, by which alone all time-determination is possible” (Kant [1781] 1998, 300). Remember Allison’s “backdrop,” cited in footnote 18. In Strawson’s terms, the second and third Analogies treat “the separate questions of the special conditions, respectively, of empirical knowledge of objective succession and of empirical knowledge of objective co-existence [simultaneity],” while the first Analogy treats the question of “the general condition of the possibility of determination of objective time-relations” (1966, 133).

ground for the successive (melodic) and simultaneous (contrapuntal) events that transpire within these persistent spans.

It is not difficult to find support for this thesis in Schenker's own writings—see, in addition to Korsyn's article, the whole of Section II of *Harmony* ([1906] 1954), which as Oswald Jonas points out in footnotes on nearly every page, anticipates later concepts of *Schichten* and *Auskomponierung*.<sup>60</sup> But it will be both more instructive and clearer if we focus on an author in the Schenkerian community whose analyses both employ the Schenkerian apparatus with elegance and ask questions about its logic. The claim here, again similar to one made by Korsyn, is that being sensitive to idealist notions of time can help neutralize, if not dispel, certain seeming problems in the Schenkerian approach. Two such problems are relevant.

In a 1987 article called “Analysis by Key,” Schachter writes that “The notion that a piece can be a unified structure in one main key and at the same time traverse several other secondary keys is very hard to express in terminology that does not seem self-contradictory” (1999, 150). Now Schachter's (idealist) “seem” makes it clear that he knows that there is no “real” self-contradiction; it only *seems* that way, perhaps to outsiders, to new students of Schenker, and so on. Regardless of that fact, in this quotation he understates the power of the Schenkerian model, which inheres precisely in its ability to give such a robust and complete model of temporality: a Schenkerian analysis models all three modi of time—not only succession and simultaneity, but persistence as their *ground*. Which is to say that Schachter's “paradox” is in fact not “self-contradictory” at all.

More urgent than the terminology in which to express certain of the Schenkerian claims is the seemingly intractable issue of the relationship of the prolonging pitches or simultaneities or chords to the prolonged one: how, one wonders, are we to understand, to *hear*, the objective reality behind Isolde's “apparent” D $\flat$ ? Kant's notion of persistence can help here: Strawson writes that it is

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60 See also much of Jonas's introduction, especially pp. ix, and xvi–xix.

Though Schenker's early admiration of Wagner is sometimes pointed out, it bears mentioning that in *Harmony*, within the space of 18 pages, Wagner is compared (favorably) both to Fux and to J. S. Bach:

The analogy between these examples from Wagner and Fux is thus closer than one might have thought at first glance. ... In fact, Wagner's method represents a development, an extension of Fux's method, not its abandonment or opposite. If both methods identically result in a liberation from the concept of the scale-step, what difference does it make if in the one case only consonances are employed, while in the other both consonances and dissonances make their appearance? ([1906] 1954, 156–157)

The paragon of composition founded magnanimously and securely on the scale-steps, whatever the audacity in voice-leading—the paragon of such composition, it seems to me, is still the work of Johann Sebastian Bach. What planning, what perspicuity, and what endurance! If I confront this work with that even of the greatest of our moderns, the work of Wagner, I must concede that Wagner, too, employs scale-steps and voice-leading with a most beautiful instinct. (174)

Schenker then criticizes Wagner for the brevity of these prolongations, which “in most cases last for only a few measures,” but the analysis in Part IIIb of this paper at least calls that statement into question. For the possibility that Wagner was more sensitive to background prolongations than the later Schenker gave him credit for, see Darcy (1990). For the fascinating claim that Schenker's turn against Wagner (toward Hanslick) is tied up with the rise of anti-Semitism in Vienna, see Cook (2007, 54, 85, 87–88, and 229–242). For the claim that his rejection of Wagner hinged upon a desire to “exorcise the influence of the wizard of Bayreuth,” see Cook (1995, 102).

impossible to draw the necessary distinctions between 1) the time-relations of the members of a subjective series of perceptions and 2) the time-relations of at least some objects which the perceptions are perceptions of, unless the objects in question are seen as belonging to an enduring framework of relations in which the objects themselves enjoy their temporal relations (of coexistence or succession) with each other independently of the order of our perceptions of them. This enduring framework of relations is spatial. Space is the necessary permanent framework for objective time-relations. ...But there is no question of perceiving the necessary framework itself, of perceiving, as it were, pure spatial permanence. So we must perceive some objects as enduring objects, even if our perceptions of them do not endure, must see them as falling under concepts of persistent objects, even though objects of non-persistent perceptions. (1966, 125)

Precisely because we cannot experience space *as such*, or time *as such*, we require certain elements (objects) to persist within a spatial framework in order objectively to perceive simultaneities or successions within that space, or within that governing time span. Or at least we must perceive them *as* enduring objects, as “falling under concepts of persistent objects.” “There is no question of perceiving the necessary framework itself,” of perceiving, as it were, pure triadic permanence. So we must perceive some triads or dyads *as* enduring objects, even if our perceptions of them do not endure, must see them as falling under concepts of persistent objects, even though objects of non-persistent perceptions. This is the function that the concept of prolongation fulfills (and by implication the function the *Ursatz* fulfills): it provides persistence, a ground for observations of succession and simultaneity (melody and counterpoint) in a musical work.

And Schenkerians know this: we capitalize on the capacity of this method to model exactly these types of temporal claims when we use it to model texted music and dramatic scenarios. Thus Graham G. Hunt can write: “note that the  $(S^*)_L$  relation, by nature, preserves the minor third between  $B\flat$  and  $D\flat$ , a referential dyad for the Nibelung’s  $B\flat$ -minor tonality; Alberich’s unwavering control over the Nibelungs is thus embedded in the motive” (2007, 13). And: “... the endless toil his Nibelung slaves must endure while he possesses the Ring.... The controlling status of the  $e^{\circ}7$  chord is indicated by its chromatic prolongation in the foreground analysis” (14). In each case, prolongation is persistence and therefore provides the ground for the perception of a set of changes that take place within its span. In dramatic scenarios not only does the prolongation provide the possibility for the events that transpire within its span, but it charges *the span itself* with dramatic meaning, e.g., “Alberich’s unwavering control”; “while he possesses the Ring”; “Horns, Day, and Reason.”

And similarly with instrumental music, so often addressed in these terms by Schenker and Schenkerians. The following quotation from Schachter should, after the foregoing, do three things: first, it should confirm that the philosophical claims Schenkerians make are the same in response to dramatic and instrumental music; second, it should show how saturated traditional Schenkerian discourse is with exactly the types of philosophical notions I have identified; and finally, it should resonate deeply with my analysis of *Tristan*, thus bringing home the analytic claim of this paper, that in certain circumstances Schenkerian techniques can treat dramatic (and instrumental) scenarios in a way that other methods simply cannot:



Any triad that is composed out has both a kinetic and a static aspect; when we hear it, we experience changes occurring within a relatively stable field. ... We can think of [the tonal field] as analogous to a place or milieu within which actions—melodic, contrapuntal, and harmonic—occur. ... the actions, of course, will constantly modify the milieu, but a core of perceived stability will abide through these changes.”<sup>61</sup>

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The three large claims I have outlined in this paper—analytic, logical, methodological—have by this point become mutually embroiled, with themselves as with the figures of Wagner, Schenker, and Kant. Their entanglement productively leads to these valedictory observations. One of the strengths of Schenkerian analysis, in its application to both dramatic and absolute music, is its capacity, through prolongation, to provide the ground for the simultaneities and successions that occur within those prolongational spans. These spans may themselves be charged with dramatic meaning, as in the examples by Schubert, Beethoven, and Wagner—it is these cases that have led me to my conclusions. But even where they are not, the abstract claim regarding prolongation and persistence still holds: through providing persistence, Schenkerian analysis provides the conditions for the possibility of succession and simultaneity at later levels.

These are the *types* of claims Schenkerian analysis makes—“dramatic” claims with the structure: “events or chords ( $x$ ) and ( $y$ ), which themselves may have some temporal thickness, occur (simultaneously or successively) within the space or span of ( $z$ ).”<sup>62</sup> This multilayered temporal structure is not some lofty abstraction; something like it undergirds the musical observations of most Schenkerians, whether in response to dramatic or absolute music. The analysis of *Tristan* showed that in certain circumstances the notion of prolongation as persistence can provide a more robust relationship between music and drama than some other types of analyses can, precisely because of the possibility for this temporal multiplicity—spans *and* events, at various levels.<sup>63</sup> It cannot be assumed that Wagnerian (or other)

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61 Schachter (1999, 161). In an important sense, Schachter here is being a more committed Kantian than I myself have been in the course of this paper, through his invocation of space. The conversion (horizontalization) of space into time is a fundamental premise of Schenker’s theory, and curiously one that isn’t given its due in Korsyn, who sees Schenker’s spatial metaphors as metaphors for temporal relations. See Schenker’s *Free Composition*, Chapter II, Section 1: §1, “In nature sound is a vertical phenomenon ... The overtone series, this vertical sound of nature, this chord in which all the tones sound at once, is transformed into a succession, a horizontal arpeggiation,” and his Figure 2. And see Jonas, who in his introduction to Schenker’s *Harmony* writes, “the chord is a simultaneity. To use a metaphor, it has a dimension in space; and the nature of music, which flows in time, demands its translation into a temporal sequence” ([1906] 1954, xvi).

62 Compare Allison’s schematic: “what must be shown is that every replacement of a given state of affairs ( $x$ ) at  $t_1$ , by some contrary state of affairs (non- $x$ ) at  $t_2$ , must be conceived and experienced as the alteration (change of state) of some entity ( $y$ ) that endures throughout the process” (2004, 239).

Schachter, who frequently criticized Schoenberg on similar grounds, provides a similar explanation for the reason Schenker’s theory surpasses Schoenberg’s in “Analysis by Key,” 155.

63 Compare Korsyn, who criticizes “thematicist” analyses on the grounds that the unity they desire to show, “however, turns into its dialectical opposite because these approaches forget the most important element in creating musical unity: time. Even if one can reduce a piece to transformations of a single basic motive, one has not yet accounted for the particular time order of

scenes or acts or operas (or passages, movements, or symphonies) must or should exhibit this type of logic *a priori*; but that fact does nothing to reduce the dramatic power of the model when (and at whatever level) it does apply.

It is perhaps not too fanciful to conclude by translating the goals of this paper into the type of prolongational script that we are now so familiar with: the three claims I laid out at the paper's opening—and to which we returned at the beginning of its end—are like a *Haupttonart*, our literal points of departure and return. To be sure, by now we have “modulated through the most varied tonalities.” We have moved through biographical, interpretive, music-analytic and philosophical arguments, each of which seems, perhaps, to be unrelated to the others. And yet—though like *Lust* and *Weh*, *Leid* and *Wonne*, the topics I have visited are far from presenting a “perfectly unified range of expression”—my hope is that they have appeared always “in [their] specific relation to the ‘original key’,” as it were, though that key was certainly not present on every page. If they have—if in their variety they have nevertheless communicated a particular, singular message—then perhaps it is because the three claims laid out at the beginning of the paper are like the B $\flat$  major in Act II Scene 1 of *Tristan*: they formed a persistent background.

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those transformations. . . . By showing how motives are anchored to the causality of middleground and background, Schenker can demonstrate unity in and through time” (1988, 55). I am going further: Schenker offers robust treatment of both temporal modi that constitute time-relations by providing persistence as their ground, and this multiplicity is one source of the power of his music-analytic claims.

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